

If employee participation increases, potential cost savings could reach as high as \$876,000

Citing the success of a one-year pilot program, Mayor Scott Avedisian and Maria Gil, managing partner and co-founder of ER Card, announced today that they will extend for another year, at no cost to the city, a program that allows City employees and their immediate family members to enroll in the innovative, electronic personal health record (ePHR) and healthcare management service.

[{rokbox text=|CLICK HERE|}/media/mayor.html{/rokbox} to view Mayor Avedisian's Video testimonial]

In January 2009, Avedisian and Gil announced the pilot program, funded through a \$75,000 grant from The Rhode Island Foundation. ER Card will absorb the cost for the second year.

ER Card members create their electronic personal health record by accessing and completing ER Card's private network software on the Internet (www.ercardmember.com), or by supplying their health information to ER Card care managers via phone, fax or email. Member information is confidential and protected within an encrypted database. All sensitive information stored through the ER Card website is VeriSign Secured. In addition, all members must complete Release and Verification of Information forms in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

ER Card members can update their health records and share their information with caregivers 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week. Members can provide doctors with access to their health record via the Internet, print a hard copy, or synchronize their electronic personal health record to a portable "flash drive" device to carry with them to medical appointments or keep with them for emergencies. ER Card's flash drive technology is the first and only portable device that can be synchronized with an online record. Doctors can access the flash drive using any computer, and it even provides optional password protection.

A total of 210 employees or family members voluntarily enrolled in the program last year. Of these, 100 individuals reported one or more prescribed and over-the-counter medications to ER Card care managers. ER Card's clinical pharmacist reviewed their charts in depth and identified 44 patients who could benefit from having their medication regimen altered, either because of drug therapy duplication, drug interactions or improper dosing. They also examined medication management issues specific to chronic diseases, such as identifying patients having risk factors for upper gastrointestinal bleeding (UGIB), and who were also using medications that are known to increase the risk of bleeding. UGIB is a serious and potentially fatal condition, typically requiring costly inpatient medical care.

Ultimately, the clinical pharmacist contacted the patient, the prescriber or both, and followed up with 39 letters. In some instances the physician modified the patient's drug regimen, and it's anticipated that more modifications will be made in the future.

ER Card estimates that the average increase in health care costs due to an adverse drug event is \$1,000 to \$2,000 per episode. Based on figures from the pilot program, they estimate that if 1,250 employees/family members were to enroll, then approximately 438 medication-related

problems would be identified, yielding a potential cost savings of \$438,000 to \$876,000 annually.

“Mayor Avedisian has taken the lead once again, to explore ways to reduce health care costs and improve care for Warwick employees, retirees and their families,” Gil said.

“ER Card’s medication management feature is a unique offering that could potentially save the City close to \$1 million a year in medication-related problems alone,” she continued. “The care coordination and pharmacist’s intervention was particularly helpful to spouses, children and retirees who do not have access to many of the specialized health and wellness programs the City has to offer.”

“We thank Mayor Avedisian for the opportunity to prove how fundamental care coordination and medication therapy support, not currently available through most health care plans, can reduce the risk of costly short and long-term health care issues. We expect year two to yield equally remarkable results,” Gil said.

“I’m very encouraged by the results of the first year, and thank ER Card for their willingness to continue this program at no cost to our employees and their families,” Avedisian said. “This provides a critical component to our ongoing efforts to help employees take proactive steps to assure good health and will ultimately help us to reduce medical expenses.”